



Class

E312

Book

.63

II 91

copy 3

Washington

Author

Title

Imprint

GPO 16-7464



AN
ORATION,

IN COMMEMORATION OF THE BIRTH OF OUR
ILLUSTRIOUS WASHINGTON,

PRONOUNCED

AT WINDSOR, FEBRUARY 24, 1812,

BEFORE THE

Washington Benevolent Society.

BY JOSIAH DUNHAM.

"WE NE'ER SHALL LOOK UPON HIS LIKE AGAIN."
Shakespeare.

PUBLISHED AT THE REQUEST OF THE SOCIETY.

WINDSOR, VT.
PRINTED BY THOMAS M. POMROY.

1812.

Copy 3

E 312
.63
D 91
Copy 3

WASHINGTONIANA

At a Regular Meeting of the WASHINGTON BENEVOLENT SOCIETY of the County of Windsor, holden at PETTES's Hall, Hon. JONATHAN H. HUBBARD, Vice President, in the Chair,—the following RESOLUTION was read, and unanimously adopted;—and Horace Everett, Esq. Hon Lewis R. Morris, and Capt. William Tileston, were appointed a Committee to carry the same into effect.

"Resolved, That the thanks of this Society be presented to their President, for his excellent ORATION, delivered at their request, on the Anniversary of our beloved WASHINGTON;—and that a Copy be requested for the Press."

ATTEST—

THOMAS M. POMROY, Sec'ry

To an application from the above named Committee, in pursuance of the foregoing Resolution, the President returned the following answer.

GENTLEMEN,

I hope I duly appreciate the partiality, with which the performance in question was received, as well as the polite manner, in which the sense of the Society has been communicated.

The *Oration* is, truly, a hasty piece of PATCHWORK,—and was intended solely for the ear. It is, however, deemed a duty to submit it to your disposal;—and that too, for certain good reasons, without alteration, or amendment.

With sentiments of respect,

I have the honor to be,

Gentlemen,

Your Obedient Servant,

J. DUNHAM

H. EVERETT, Esq.

Gen. L. R. MORRIS,

Capt. W. TILESTON,

} Committee.

*Gift
Dr J. Vernon Briggs
March 2. 1929*

ORATION.



FRIENDS AND FELLOW-CITIZENS!

IF ANCIENT republics were proud of their heroes and law-givers, surely Americans may be proud of the FATHER OF THEIR COUNTRY. If *Greece* gloried in the names of SOLON, of LYCURGUS, of THEMISTOCLES;—If *Rome* gloried in the names of ROMULUS and NUMA, of FABIUS and her SCIPIOS; surely *Americans* may glory in the name of WASHINGTON. If the *Greeks* and the *Romans* celebrated the memory of those immortal leaders and founders of their republics, by eulogies and orations, by festivals and games, for the purpose of stimulating their countrymen to a grateful recollection & zealous emulation of their virtues, then surely *Americans* ought ever to commemorate the name of WASHINGTON.

Tho' the HERO now sleeps with his fathers; tho' his bones are now mouldering, with those of his compatriots, in the bosom of that country, for whose liberties they toiled and suffered; yet the heart, which is grateful and good, will cheerfully yield the tribute, due to his memory. History may, possibly, do justice to his merits. Columns and mausolea may yet, one day, be erected to his memory: but even this would not be enough. We ought to dwell, with delight, on every trait of his venerable character;—to admire that brilliant constellation of inestimable qualities, which constitute the Hero, the Statesman,

the Patriot, the Christian, and THE MAN. We ought to impress upon the rising age the name of Washington ; to engrave, on the living tablet of the heart, a sweet remembrance of his illustrious virtues ; which, descending from generation to generation, shall prove a monument of affection, more useful than records, more honorary than the marble column, more glorious, than the triumphal arch of the conqueror, and more lasting, than the perishable works of human art ;—a monument, which shall survive the ravages of *Time*, and bid defiance to his desolating power, when even “the proudest pyramid of them all shall be humbled in the dust.”

Will it be said, that the character of WASHINGTON is sufficiently known?—Will it be said, that there are men, in this assembly, *who have seen the Hero*?—Who have fought by his side,—witnessed his greatness,—and borne, with him, during the burden and heat of the day, the toils, the dangers, and the glories, of our Revolution?

Be it so ;—still the theme becomes the occasion : it is interesting, and must please ; useful—and cannot fail to instruct ; copious—& can never be exhausted.

I will not, on this happy occasion, either dampen your generous ardor, or harrow up your indignant feelings, by dwelling on those painful events, which proved the origin of that cruel and unnatural war, which cut the tender ligaments of national connection, between *Columbia* and her mother *Britain*. Suffice it to say, that it was by a variety of unconstitutional acts, on the part of that government, to which we then owed an honest and faithful allegiance ; by repeated aggressions on our rights and liberties ; by a series of encroachments on those inestimable privileges, which, under the British Constitution, were then, equally, the birth-right and the glory of every Englishman.—In short, to use the strong language of our revolutionary patriots,—it was a tissue of “*injuries and usurpations, all having in direct object the establishment of an absolute tyranny over these States.*”

In reviewing the DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE, among the numerous topics of just complaint, we find the following.

The British (then our) government *made judges dependent on its will, for the tenure of their offices :— and the amount and payment of their salaries ;—*

It created a multitude of new offices, and sent among us, (posting them in our several towns and Villages,) swarms of Custom-House and other Officers, to harrass our people and to devour our substance.

It raised, and kept among us, standing armies, in time of peace, without the consent of our State Legislatures ;—

It affected to render the military power, independent of, and superior to, the civil :—

It was denounced, by the republican spirit of our country, and justly too,—

For depriving us, in some cases, of the right of trial by jury ;—

For transporting us, by sea, to a distance from our homes, to be tried for pretended offences ;—

For quartering among us armed Troops ;—

FOR CUTTING OFF OUR TRADE WITH ALL PARTS OF THE WORLD ;—

For protecting the officers of government, from punishment, by a mock-trial; (or, what is still more glaring, BY NO TRIAL AT ALL) for MURDERS THEY COMMITTED ON THE CITIZENS OF THESE STATES :—

For imposing upon us a cruel and oppressive system of taxation ;—a STAMP TAX—a TEA TAX ;— and, had these been submitted to, they would, probably, have been followed with a Salt Tax, and a Land Tax !—

What a horrid system of tyranny was this ?—a system, to which, I am bold to declare, no nation on earth, retaining the spirit, the character, and the essential rights of Freemen, will ever submit. What a bitter cup of degradation and calamity was here presented to our lips !—It was the cup of Oppression,

and its ingredient was Despotism :—presented too, by that government, to which we owed allegiance, and which, in turn, was bound to protect us. Where was the high-minded, free-born, *true American*, that would drink of such a cup?—*Not one!*—It was spurned from the touch, and indignantly dashed in the teeth of our oppressor.

But the sordid minions of governmental power were now actually *thriving* and *happy*, on this dreadful system,—so ruinous to the people,—so fatal to our liberties. They supported, of course, and commended this system. It was clearly their interest, and they, possibly, thought it their duty, to applaud, indiscriminately, every act of the Administration.—Nay, they went farther;—they even dared to denounce, as *REBELS*, and *traitors to their country*, all who could even doubt the wisdom, or expediency, of Executive measures. In their estimation, “*affairs were never more prosperous*”! With the silversmith at Ephesus, they could say—“*By this CRAFT, we have our wealth* :”—and thus, while these panders of office were picking up the crumbs, which fell from the *royal* table; while they could retain their places, their influence, and emoluments; they could neither *see* nor *feel* the calamities of their country. Hence, the whole herd of petty tyrants, of civil and military officers, of spies and informers, of tools and tories, with *Governor HUTCHINSON* at their head, set up, at once, the *hue-and-cry* of treason and rebellion; the sword was drawn by government against us;—the Gordian-knot was cut;—and we, the people, were compelled to assert our rights, and to maintain them;—or to perish in the attempt.

What a lesson to tyrants! What a dreadful lesson to *any* government, that dares encroach on the sacred rights of *FREEMEN*!

Now arrived the solemn crisis,—the hour, “that tried men’s souls.” What could be done? We were an infant nation; but just arising from the cradle of

parental care :—Like a dutiful aggrieved child, we looked up to Britain, with tears of humility and respect, *for protection*. Our voice was not heard: We remonstrated; we demanded justice. Instead of the mild whispers of peace, or the soft soothings of maternal love, we were answered with the blazing of cannon and the thunders of war. We were then feeble, and there was none to help. Where should we look for a leader?—Who would go up to fight against the enemies of Liberty?—The finger of Heaven was pointed to WASHINGTON———who in the affair of *Braddock*, had already exhibited talents of no ordinary cast, by bravely rescuing the mangled skeleton of an army, from a merciless *French* and *Savage* foe, and by almost snatching the laurel from the brow of exulting Victory. Yes—in this dark hour, when hardly a gleam of light, or a ray of hope, could be discerned, thro' the impenetrable gloom, which enveloped our country; when Despair had become our secret companion;—then, as a nation, we leaned on the only Arm, that could save.—“In our distress, we cried unto the LORD; and he heard us, when there was none to deliver.” The *Star* of DIVINE WISDOM, which once stood over *Bethlehem*, now rested upon *Mount Vernon*;—and the Sages of the West were conducted to the abode of our political Savior.

“ Where beauteous *Vernon* blooms in rural pride,
And broad *Potowmac*'s shoalless waters glide,
Great WASHINGTON, in ease and wealth reclin'd,
Mid every charm reposed his godlike mind;
Rear'd in embattled scenes and born to dare,
Each varying danger of the chanceful war;
The lengthen'd line to break, the height command,
To force the camp, and free the fetter'd land;
His was the first of Fortune's gift to claim,
And his the triumph of unbounded fame.
Indulgent Nature, emulously kind,
Gave to his form the graces of his mind,
While his bold stature towers supremely high,
And, like his genius, claims the lifted eye;

The kindly features, peace and truth impart,
 Calm as his reason, open as his heart ;
 For him the bleeding *States* united call,
 On him, the hopes of varying millions fall ;
 With grief and praise, his melting soul assail,
 And breathe a prayer in every gliding gale.

“ Touch’d by the view of dark impending woes,
 From scenes of bliss, the patriot Champion rose ;
 Disdain’d the meed his peerless perils claim,
 His trophy freedom, and his guerdon fame ;
 Could, with firm mind, luxurious peace despise,
 And scorning wealth, to every glory rise,
 At night’s mid hour, to lead his hardy train,
 O’er the bleak height and thro’ the murky plain,
 From the burnt shores, where *Carolina* glows,
 To the deep winter of *Canadian* snows ;
 He quits the lap of ease, the bower of love,
 The peaceful mansion and the vocal grove,
 Braves the dark scene, where cold Misfortune lowers,
 And meets the rage of yet unconquer’d powers ;—
 Powers,—that his blooming youth to battle led ;
 For whom he triumph’d, and for whom he bled ;
 On those the Chief his patriot falchion turns ;
 And *Friendship* slumbers,—while his country mourns.”

Such was WASHINGTON, when called, by the united voice of his country, to the post of duty, difficulty, and danger. And who else, without the weaknesses which depreciate, or the vices which disgrace, human nature, could have displayed all the virtues, and exerted all the talents, which enoble man, or adorn the Hero?—Who, but WASHINGTON, amidst the contending elements of our revolution, with modest dignity and un baffled skill, could have “rode upon the whirlwind and directed the storm”?—Always calm and serene, always firm and inflexible, always prompt and decided ; in short, ALWAYS HIMSELF—he was found prepared for every event, and adequate to every trust. It was his wisdom, his prudence, his circumspection, his moderation, which turned, at last, the fortune of the day, and crowned us with victory.

Shall we compare the character of GENERAL *Washington*, with that of other Generals & Heroes, either ancient or modern?—Alas!—no parallel can be drawn. Their characters will be found as various, as their respective motives of action, and as the objects for which they severally contended; as different, as sordid ambition from true glory; as self interest from honest patriotism; as vice from virtue. CROMWELL,—CÆSAR,—ALEXANDER,—were distinguished Generals. But their most splendid actions may be traced to the most sordid selfishness, or the most ignoble passions: false ambition, love of power, cold hypocrisy, or cruel revenge.

Not so with WASHINGTON:—the good he aimed at was his country's;—the glory, to which he aspired, was *that of having done his duty!*

CROMWELL, with the zeal of a fanatic, with the cant of a hypocrite, and with the syren song of "*Liberty*," could subvert a throne to enthrone himself.

CÆSAR could subdue nations—but "CÆSAR was ambitious:—he could not subdue his own heart. Flushed with the laurels of victory abroad, he could not brook a superior at home.—He had vanquished the enemies of Rome:—why could he not vanquish Romans?—It was done. He crossed the *Rubicon*,—triumphed at *Pharsalia*,—sieved upon the government,—and gave chains to an empire.

ALEXANDER—the *Great*—he was a Conqueror. He conquered the world. Nay—he conquered himself!—After having wantonly overrun the world, laying waste, with fire and sword, the fairest portion of humanity; and, with the fury of a Demon, crying "*havoc!*" among the noblest works of God; after having shed more blood, and produced more human misery, than any other inhuman being, (if we except "*NAPOLEON LE GRAND*") he fell a victim to his ambition;—the poor, pitiful ambition, of having it to say, that he could swallow more wine, than any other *brute* in his army!!!—He did so, indeed—and died

in a debauch ;—while his revelling companions pronounced the following *Hic Jacet*, over his wretched remains—

HERE LIES—

THE CONQUEROR OF THE WORLD—

" Shrunken to 'his sorry measure' !!! "

Not so with WASHINGTON :—his ambition was of a nobler stamp ; and his glory, like the Christian's hope " was founded on a rock." He fought, not for himself, but for his fellow man ;—not to conquer, but to defend ;—not to ruin a foe, but to protect a people ;—not to enslave a country, but to free, to bless, to build up a nation ;—to establish it on the broad basis of EQUAL RIGHTS, in the enjoyment of liberty, and under the protection of law.

Such was the object, which led WASHINGTON to the field ;—and, when his work was done, when he found the name of *Columbia* inscribed on the list of independent Empires, he sheathed his sword ; threw down his laurels, at the feet of that country, for which he had so gloriously triumphed ; and, great, like CINCINNATUS, returned to the *Plough* ;—to the bosom of his dear delighted family ;—to the exercise of the domestic virtues ;—and to the cultivation and enjoyment of the soft arts of peace. Wonderful man !

Like the Hero of Ossian, " he was terrible in the battles of his steel ;—his sword was like lightning in the field ;—his voice like thunder on the distant hills :—many fell by his hand ; they were consumed in the flames of his wrath. But, when returned from the war, how peaceful was his brow !—His face was like the Sun after rain ;—like the moon, in the silence of the night ; calm, as the breast of the lake, when the loud wind is laid !"—

" Thou HERO ! once *Columbia's* proudest boast,
 ' In peace our council, and in war our host.—
 As erst when *Pharaoh*, 'neath his tyrant band,
 Relentless, crush'd the chosen Patriarch band ;
 MOSES, with pious care, the people led,

And pour'd destruction on the guilty head ;
 Guided them, dauntless, thro' the wat'ry waste,
 And the bold path thro' trackless deserts trac'd ;
 Reviv'd desponding hopes, and calm'd their fears,
 While all *Mount Sinai* thunder'd in their ears,
 Till the poor pilgrim tribes, each danger past,
 Saw the bright *Land of Promise* rise, at last ;
So stoodst thou once,—our shelt'ring cloud by day,
 Our fiery pillar in the midnight way ;—
 Led'st, thro' Oppression's pathless wilds along,
 Thy fainting bands, and sooth'd the murm'ring throng ;
 Blest with thy smiles and with thy bounty fed,
 Turn'd rocks to water, and the dew to bread ;
 The wearied pilgrim cheer'd with prospect sweet,
 And crush'd the *Tory serpent*, at thy feet,—
 Till Freedom rose—with beaming splendors bright,
 And all *Canaan's* glories, gladden'd on the sight."

The character of the *General*, of the patriot-*Hero*, is now consummated. But the splendid fabric of WASHINGTON's fame is but half completed. Like MOSES, he has led us forth from the land of bondage and, thro' a wilderness of dangers and a Red Sea of blood, has introduced us to a view of the promised land of peace and independence. But here the parallel fails. MOSES was not permitted to enter that *Canaan*, which he could only behold, at a distance. to JOSHUA, at whose command "the Sun stood still on Gibeon, and the Moon in the valley of Ajalon ;"—To JOSHUA it was given, to cross the mighty *Jordan*, to take possession of the promised land, and to lay the foundations of the empire of *Israel*. WASHINGTON was both our MOSES and our JOSHUA :—He crossed the Jordan of *Anarchy*, which succeeded the Revolution ; took possession of this goodly land ; and established the *Ark* of our political covenant, in the adoption of the Federal Constitution. Nay—he did more :—like DAVID, he drove out the *Savage Philistines* before him, established peace in our borders, and silenced the ABSALOM of *sedition*, who had erected the standard of REBELLION, in our political *Hebron*, in the west. He exhibited also the wisdom

of SOLOMON, in the Administration of our government ;—in his skill to do justice and judgement, before the people ;—in making a league of *amity and commerce* with powerful nations ;—in patronizing industry and enterprize, agriculture and the arts :—And, like SOLOMON, *he too erected a TEMPLE—the majestic temple of our RIGHTS and LIBERTIES*,—on the favorite spot, which he himself had chosen, and consecrated, for that great national object ;—and which his grateful countrymen have since honored and rendered immortal, by calling it—“THE CITY OF WASHINGTON.”

At the close of our revolutionary war, we were found, indeed, free and independent ; but without government, without union, and almost without resources. It was soon found, that in the hour of peril, a sense of common danger had proved alone our common bond of union. Different states had different interests ; and the old Articles of Confederation had no longer any power. Like the cords, with which Sampson was bound, they became as flax, which had been scorched in the fire ; and for the ordinary purposes of government, or for promoting the general welfare, they were but a mere “rope of sand.” The country was deeply involved in debt, a scene of anarchy ensued, and general distress prevailed. We were in possession of the ground, we had a broad basis, and had, indeed, collected the materials, *for a mighty empire !* But where was the Architect, where the political *Hiram*, who could place the corner stone, complete the foundation, connect the various parts, adjust the symmetry and proportions of the whole, and erect the superstructure ;—the grand, the stupendous fabric of a REPUBLICAN GOVERNMENT ?

Again the finger of Heaven was pointed to WASHINGTON.—The *Star* still stood over *Mount Vernon* :—and he was again called forth, as the strength of our national hope, and the rock of our political salvation.

A convention had been formed, with WASHINGTON at its head, for the purpose of establishing a rational system of government, the best possible adapted to its only legitimate object, *the freedom and security of the citizen*. Such a system, it was correctly believed, must be an elective republicanism, of the mixt kind, equally remote from Despotism and Democracy. Such a system of government had long been the grand desideratum of political writers; and the great question was, how far the individual must sacrifice to the public;—how far natural liberty must be surrendered; and how far retained; so as to secure the citizen from lawless depredation, on the one hand, and, on the other, from tyrannic sway. Mankind, ever terrified into submission by a rod of iron, have, without resistance, either bowed the neck to the yoke, or have been flattered and betrayed by the blasphemous mockery of designing Demagogues; who, like CROMWELL, or ROBESPIERRE, or NAPOLEON, under the plausible pretence of being the *friends of the people, with the sacred name of LIBERTY on their tongues, and with the TYRANNY of HELL in their hearts*, have been, unsuspectedly, engaged, in riveting the chains of galling Slavery.

The unstable nature of the Republics of antiquity, and the precarious tenure, by which the rights of the people were secured, arose, no doubt, from a want of the principle; to which we allude; that nice balance of authority, which can be produced only by throwing such a *quantum* of power into the different Departments, as will, by the operation of checks, equally secure individual liberty and the public weal.

A monarchical despotism is a tremendous evil; nor is the wild misrule of a fierce democracy scarcely less to be dreaded. It is too often a government of passion, prejudice, and injustice; and is equally remote from the mild empire of reason and truth. Hence the necessity of guarding, as well against the evils of licentiousness, as the grasp of tyranny; of so constituting

a government, as to give the most ample security for the enjoyment of life and property, with the greatest possible degree of personal liberty and rational freedom.

In constructing a Constitution for our country, to all the other difficulties necessarily attendant on so nice a calculation for the general good throughout, what Mr. QUINCY calls a congregation of empires, were now superadded the obstacles, almost insurmountable, resulting from our extended territory; from the variety of our climate, and productions; from the difference in our local habits and customs;—and from the necessary collision of local interests.

Such was the Herculean task, which WASHINGTON and his *Compatriots* were destined, by Heaven, to perform for their Country.—*And it was done.*

The FEDERAL CONSTITUTION is a “stupendous fabric of human wisdom.” It was projected by WASHINGTON, and had infused into it his whole soul. It was the most perfect model of government ever exhibited to the world. It combines all the wisdom and experience of ages; and is better calculated, than any other yet known, to guarantee to the citizen freedom and security; prosperity and happiness.

Is it possible, that such a constitution, an instrument so wisely planned, could have enemies?—It had—and they were denominated, of course, ANTI-FEDERALISTS.*

In some of the state conventions, this Federal Compact met a powerful opposition: but at length, the voice of wisdom was heard; the Constitution was adopted; and its administration was entrusted, by the unanimous call of a grateful people, to its principal Projector, the only legitimate “FATHER OF OUR COUNTRY.”

After the loud tempest of the Revolution had ceas-

* A name afterwards exchanged for that of *Democrats*,—or *Democratic Republicans*.

ed to roar, when the dark storm of Adversity had passed over our heads, and the flitting clouds of Anarchy had disappeared, to behold WASHINGTON once more at the helm, was, indeed, "*as the appearance of the Sun after rain*" : it dissipated the gloom, that surrounded us, and enkindled new ardors in the breast of the desponding patriot. It seemed the harbinger of many and great blessings to our country. Faction shrunk before him, and hid its malignant head. Confidence and hope were restored, even to the war-worn *Soldier*, when he could thus again look up to his illustrious Leader, and, in his face, behold a pledge that he should not, in his old age, be forgotten by his country ; nor be doomed, at last, like the aged and blind BELLISARIUS, to—

" Beg bitter bread, thro' realms, his valor sav'd."

The ground work of *Washington's* policy : both at home and abroad, was A SACRED REGARD TO PUBLIC JUSTICE : and in relation to the two great Belligerents, a policy, which necessarily grew out of this principle, AN HONEST, IMPARTIAL, and DETERMINED, NEUTRALITY. To extend to them our COMMERCIAL relations, but to have with them as little POLITICAL connection, as possible ; " constantly keeping in view, that it is folly, in one nation, to look for disinterested favors from another." And, upon this ground, it is, that he so solemnly warns us, against indulging an inveterate antipathy against the one, or a passionate attachment for the other ; but to cultivate just and amicable feelings towards both. Because, said he, " the nation, which indulges towards another an habitual hatred, or an habitual fondness, is, in some degree, a slave. It is a slave to its animosity, or to its affection—either of which is sufficient to lead it astray from its duty and its interest."

In pursuance of this wise, this just, this magnanimous policy, a regular yet free government was organized ;—

The foundations of a revenue were laid, with that of a navy to protect it ;—

Provision was made for the payment of the public debt ;—

A small army was raised, and a Savage foe reduced to peace and friendship ;—

Treaties of amity and commerce were formed with *European* nations ;—

The ground of an HONEST NEUTRALITY was taken,—and SUPPORTED ;—

Trade and agriculture, industry and the arts, again revived ;—

The American name became known and respected abroad ;—

And, in short, at the *fiat* of Washington, social and political *order* came forth out of a confused *Chaos* of national elements ; while its happy result was such years of domestic peace, individual happiness, and national prosperity, as the world never before witnessed. In possession of the land, which flowed with milk and honey, we had literally, peace in our borders, plenty in our dwellings, and health in our habitations !

That such were the happy fruits of the *Washingtonian*, or *Federal Republican*, policy, will not be denied. We cannot open our eyes, without beholding evidence of this impressive fact. The official records and Reports of our national government. The unexampled increase of our population and wealth ; the trade and extent of our seaport towns ;—the sudden growth of our country villages ;—the successful enterprise of our merchants ;—the thriving industry of our mechanics ;—the honest independence of our farmers ;—the almost *palaces* (as they would be called in Europe) in which they reside ;—the numerous steeds in their stalls,—the flocks, that whiten their mountains—and the cattle that graze on their thousand hills,—all attest the correctness of Washington principles, the superior excellence of his policy, and the consummate wisdom of his measures.

But, if this were not enough, we might appeal to the testimony of those, who succeeded to the Administration of our affairs, with the popular Expectation, that the condition of our country would, by this change of men, be rendered still more flourishing.

When Mr. JEFFERSON was placed in the executive chair, he did a signal act of justice to his predecessors in office. He bore official testimony, strong and unequivocal, to the excellence of our constitution and to the wisdom of its antecedent administration. For he declared, that our republican system was, then, "*in the full tide of successful experiment.*" Never was more ample justice displayed in fewer words;—for the whole annals of man do not exhibit any country, under so brilliant a prospect, or in so rapid a career, to the bright goal of individual happiness & of national glory. A twelve years' experiment had been made, and was crowned with success. And, if the professions of our FRIENDS OF THE PEOPLE had been sincere, and if their talents had been such, as ought to wield the destinies of an empire, had we not a right to expect, that the condition of our country would, in their hands, be still farther improved?—that "the tide of success" would still continue to flow?—that our national felicity would still farther increase?—and, in short, that the morning Sun of our country's greatness, which rose with such unrivalled splendor, should have continued its majestic march towards the bright meridian of our hopes, and have been now seen shedding abroad, upon our land, the bright effulgence of its beams, in unclouded day.

How far this reasonable expectation has been realized,—let each individual, in this assembly, *decide for himself.*

Suffice it to remark, that the *twelve years* of democratic administration have now nearly expired;—and let the Successor, whoever he may be, *REPAY THE COMPLIMENT,—if he honestly can.*

In contemplating the durability of republican institutions, if we search into the first causes of their decline, we shall always find it to proceed from a want of virtue in the people, manifested by their appointing to office *unprincipled men* ; men, who talk much of the rights of the citizen, and of their country's weal, while they mean only their own interest ; men, who like **ABSALOM**, take every one by the hand, saluting him kindly, & exclaiming—“ *Oh ! that I were made judge in the land, that every man, who had a cause, or suit, might come unto me, and I would do him justice*” !

It has long been a maxim, with political writers, that **VIRTUE** is the basis of a republican government ; and perhaps no man ever felt a more solemn conviction of this truth, than **WASHINGTON**. *He* never vauntingly declared, that “ for ten years, he had never seen the inside of a church ! ! ”—No—but, from his youth up, was a constant and devout attendant on the worship and ordinances of God. In all his public acts, he acknowledges the influence of an overruling Providence : not merely that cold and formal acknowledgement, *to save appearances*, and which decency requires ; but which expresses, in the most strong and unequivocal terms, an unceasing sense of dependence, and an unshaken reliance, on an **OMNIPOTENT ARM**, as the only anchor, sure and stedfast, even of worldly hope. Altho' this circumstance is well known, to most of this audience, yet this strong trait of his character is so interesting in itself, and so important to our country, that I cannot resist the temptation to read an extract, or two, in support of what I have advanced. At the termination of the war, he addressed a Valedictory Circular to the *Governors* of the several States, which he closes thus—

“ I now make it my earnest prayer, that God would have you, and the State, over which you preside, in his holy protection ; that he would incline the hearts of the citizens, to cultivate, a spirit of subordination and obedience to government, to entertain a brotherly affection, and love, for one another ; for their fellow

citizens of the United States, at large ; and, particularly, for their brethren, who have served in the field : and, finally, that he would most graciously be pleased to dispose us all, to do justice, to love mercy, and to demean ourselves, with that charity, humility, and pacific temper of the mind, which were the characteristics of the Divine Author of our blessed religion ; without an humble imitation of whose example, in these things, we can never hope to be a happy nation."

Again, in his INAUGURAL ADDRESS to Congress, he declares, that "the foundations of our national policy must be laid in the pure and immutable principles of *private morality*."—And he adds—

"I dwell on this prospect, with every satisfaction, which an ardent love for my country can inspire ; since there is no truth more thoroughly established, than that there exists, in the economy & course of nature, an indissoluble union between virtue and happiness—between duty and advantage—between the genuine maxims of an honest and magnanimous policy, and the solid rewards of public prosperity and felicity. Since we ought to be no less persuaded, that the propitious smiles of Heaven can never be expected on a nation, that disregards the eternal rules of order and right, which Heaven itself has ordained."

And, once more, in his Valedictory Address, he says—

"Of all the dispositions and habits, which lead to political prosperity, *religion* and *morality* are inseparable supports. In vain would that man claim the tribute of patriotism, who should labor to subvert these great pillars of human happiness, these firmest props of the duties of man and citizens. A volume could not trace all their connections with private and public felicity. Let it be simply asked, where is the security for property, for reputation, for life, if the sense of religious obligation desert the paths, which are the instruments of investigation in courts of justice ?—And let us, with caution, indulge the supposition, that morality can be maintained, without religion. Reason and experience both forbid us to expect, that national morality can prevail, in exclusion of religious principle. It is substantially true, that virtue is a necessary spring of popular government.—Who, then, that is a sincere friend to it, can look, with indifference, upon any attempts to shake the foundation of the fabric ?"

Such was the spirit, such the purity of *republican* principle, which actuated WASHINGTON. How different this spirit, how opposite its influence, on the affairs of a nation, from the operation of that *infidel philosophy* of revolutionary France, which teaches us,

that THE END SANCTIONS THE MEANS, *however wicked, or corrupt* ; and, that it is of no consequence to society, whether my neighbor believes “ *in TWENTY GODS, or NO GOD* ;” because, forsooth, such a harmless belief, “ *neither picks my pocket, nor breaks my leg*” !!!

It was the CHRISTIAN *philosophy*, the RELIGION of *Washington*, to which we are indebted for the wisdom of his measures, and the consequent prosperity of our country. It was because the foundations of *his* policy “ *were laid in the pure and immutable principles of private morality,*” bottomed on “ *religion* ;” because he perceived “ *an indissoluble union, between virtue and happiness—between duty and advantage—between the genuine maxims of an honest and magnanimous policy and the solid rewards of public prosperity and national felicity.*” In short, because *his* policy, was “ *THAT RIGHTEOUSNESS, WHICH EXALTETH A NATION*” ; and which alone will secure to the government of any people “ *the full tide of successful experiment.*”

In no public act of WASHINGTON’S did any selfishness appear. His integrity was incorruptible ; his ends upright ; his means direct ; and “ *his professions—both to his fellow-citizens, and to foreign nations, were always sincere.*”

He seems to have had a single eye to THE GLORY OF GOD and to the good of his country. Hence that meekness and humility, unalloyed with a particle of pride, which led him, on all occasions, to a diffidence of his own powers, and to *lean*, for strength and support, ON HEAVEN ALONE. How strongly is this wonderful trait of his character illustrated, in the close of his *Valedictory Address* !

“ *In reviewing,*” says he, “ *the incidents of my Administration, altho’ I am unconscious of intentional error, I am nevertheless too sensible of my defects, not to think it probable, that I may have committed many errors. Whatever they may be, I fervently beseech the Almighty to avert or mitigate the evils to which they may tend. I shall always carry with me the hope,*

that my country will never cease to view them with indulgence; and that after forty five years of my life dedicated to its service, with an upright zeal, the faults of incompetent abilities will be consigned to oblivion, as myself must soon be to the mansions of rest."

And he is *at rest*.—He is now gone, to join the band of Christian patriots and heroes, who fought and bled by his side. Shaded with laurels of unfading green, crowned with a diadem of glory, he is now **AT REST**, in that world, where wars and toils can never come. Like **ELIJAH**, he has ascended to Heaven in the bright chariot of his glory! Well may the Patriot exclaim, with the forsaken **ELISHA**,—"MY FATHER! MY FATHER!—THE CHARIOT OF ISRAEL!"—

O my countrymen! my countrymen!—Is there no **ELISHA**—Is there no **ELISHA**, in our *American Israel*,—on whom his mantle has fallen?—

[Here a mournful *Dirge*, exquisitely plaintive and pathetic, from an unknown part of the gallery, at once arrested the attention of the audience; and the rest of the Oration was lost,—except the following.]

ADDRESS.

GENTLEMEN OFFICERS,
AND BRETHREN OF THIS SOCIETY!

IT was a favorite maxim with certain ancient philosophers, that "TRUTH IS GREAT and MUST PREVAIL." Out of a confidence in this maxim grew "*the Washington Benevolent Society*";—for upon this rock, the eternal basis of TRUTH, was the Institution founded. Happy then am I to see it flourish;—happy, indeed, in finding it established within your friendly walls; and thrice happy, my Brethren, in being able to address you, on this joyful anniversary, as members of this extensive, this respectable, this growing Fraternity.

Altho' *politics* are, by no means, the main object (as by some supposed,) of this Institution; yet, it

will not be denied, that one important end contemplated by its founders, was, *by correcting the MORAL, to correct also the POLITICAL sentiment of our Fellow-Citizens*; and, in this way, to contribute their mite, towards preserving our invaluable Constitution;—towards perpetuating our republican blessings; and towards enabling our countrymen to transmit, unimpaired, to posterity, that freedom and independence, that security and happiness, for which our Fathers fought, and bled, and conquered.

We have already shown, that the policy of our illustrious Patron was founded in a sacred regard to justice, to virtue, to religion. And, on what other foundation, shall we look for *real benevolence*? Where else shall we look for that true philanthropy, which contributes most to the happiness of our species; and which is better promoted among our fellow-citizens, *by forming in their minds true principles of morality and integrity*, than *even* by relieving them with donations in money? This was a *benevolence*, in which WASHINGTON excelled, perhaps, every other man; and in which, of course, he more nearly resembled the beneficent AUTHOR of our holy religion.

But the benevolence of WASHINGTON was not a speculative benevolence, so diffusive, as *equally* to embrace within its liberal range, the whole family of man; nor of that cold and contracted stamp, which rests alone in moral theory, and is calculated only to adorn the closet of the philosopher. No—it was a living fountain—an active principle,—which delighted in human felicity;—in doing good, and communicating.

His private alms and humble deeds of charity, tho' not done before men, to be seen of them, were yet well known to be equally commensurate with his ample fortune and the benevolence of his heart. The public institutions, to which he so liberally contributed, display the munificence of his character, as the great Patron of all, that was useful to our country.

In addressing you, my Brethren, as the members of a social & Benevolent Institution, I need only exhort you to study his character and to copy his great example. In the various characters and situations, in which he was called to act, *learn what WASHINGTON did—then, “go ye, and DO LIKEWISE.”*

It was a maxim of Divine Wisdom, enjoined upon us by our blessed Saviour, and unquestionably the most correct criterion, by which, either to judge, or be judged,—“*By their fruits ye shall know them.*”—Let us embrace and follow this unerring guide. And while we are silently marking the conduct of others, and appreciating their motives, by this golden maxim; let us not forget, that the avowed enemies of our Institution, at least, if not the world at large, are at the same time watching *us*, rigidly scrutinizing *our* conduct, appreciating *our* motives, judging of *our* fruits;—and, to speak most charitably, we may venture to assert, that they will, at least, apply to us this same maxim, as the most liberal measure of our own perfection.

Let us then walk worthily of our high vocation, as **WASHINGTONIANS**. Let us remember our various duties, as men, as citizens, and as members of this Society. Our duties to our God, to our neighbor, to our Government, and to the world at large.

As citizens of a great Republic, our political maxims are drawn from our illustrious Leader;—from his life and example; from his Valedictory Address; and from that magnanimous policy, which distinguished his wise administration. We are to regard the **FEDERAL CONSTITUTION**, as the ark of our political safety; to guard against its invasions, from whatever quarter; & *to cling to the Union*, as the last sheet anchor, of our national hopes. We are to divest ourselves of all foreign prejudices and predilections; & to be **AMERICANS**, in thought, word, and deed.

As members of this Institution, we are to cultivate harmony, friendship, and love, among the Brethren; and to aid and assist each other, in our several lawful vocations, so far as we can do it, consistently with our own interest, and our duty to others. We are to cherish within our circle, and to exhibit before the world, BENEVOLENCE, CHARITY, & GOOD FRUITS; *to do justice, and to love mercy*—to soothe affliction, to commiserate misfortune, to raise up the bowed down, and to dissipate the dark clouds of the disconsolate, or to gild their gloom with the calm sun-shine of peace. In short, we ought, in our various relations, to let our light so shine before men, as to become a lamp to their paths, and thus to render ourselves an example worthy of imitation. It is by such a line of conduct, that we may hope to secure to ourselves the esteem and the confidence of the good and the wise; and to induce the real patriot and the honest man, to fly to our standard, and to enlist under our banners. And it is thus alone, that we can hope to obtain, at length, A TRIUMPH, over the tremendous powers of Ignorance, Prejudice, & Error; a triple alliance, which has so long usurped the empire of Reason and Truth. Such a triumph would indeed be glorious—it would be worthy of our noblest exertions and of our highest worldly hopes. It would, indeed, be a work of *true benevolence*, of the purest patriotism, and of the most exalted virtue:—it would be worthy of a union of virtuous, honest, and patriotic citizens;—it would be worthy of the name, which we have assumed,—that of the WASHINGTON BENEVOLENT SOCIETY.

FINIS.





LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 011 712 008 9